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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effectiveness of providing instructional travel monies (e.g., field trips) to severely handicapped students in the Albuquerque (New Mexico) Public Schools. Interviews, record reviews, and survey research were undertaken to evaluate the impact of the program on students and on the instructional program. Fifty-two field trips were conducted, primarily for purposes of reward or reinforcement, connections with specific goals on students' individualized education programs (IEPs), and as culminating activities for particular study units. Principals, special education administrators, and special education teachers surveyed reported the activities had positive impacts on IEPs, on students' social development, and on instruction. More than 85% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the program should continue to receive P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) funds. (CL)

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1985-86
EVALUATION REPORT

P.L. 94-142
Instructional Travel Program

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EVALUATION REPORT

P.L. 94-142
Instructional Travel

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

Program Description

Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) elected to use some of its Public Law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act-Part B (P.L. 94-142) funds to provide instructional travel monies (e.g., field trips) to C and D level classes. The APS Special Education Department chose to provide instructional travel monies for C and D level classes because students in these classes are considered to be the most severely handicapped and in need of the most intervention according to New Mexico State Regulations.

Each C and D level class (except programs for the gifted which are excluded in P.L. 94-142) was allocated $45.00. While recognizing that $45.00 could not cover all costs of a class field trip, program planners intended to partially defray the cost. According to a memo sent out by the District P.L. 94-142 Plan Manager, the field trip..."must be tied to an instructional goal area contained in the I.E.P. [Individualized Education Program] of those students included in the trip" (Special Education Department memo, October 1, 1985, p. 1).

Methodology

The study was designed to evaluate the program in terms of impact on students and on instructional program. The study also looked at the overall effectiveness of the program. Data were collected by three methods: interviews, review of records, and survey research.

Major Findings

The major findings of the study included the following:

(1) Fifty-two (52) different field trips were selected by C and D level programs.

(2) Respondents to the survey indicated that they selected field trips primarily for three different instructional purposes:

   (a) To provide a reward or reinforcer for students' behavior.
   (b) To provide an activity related to a specific instructional goal on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
   (c) To provide a culminating activity for a particular unit of study.

(3) Principals, special education administrators, and special education teachers surveyed felt strongly that the P.L. 94-142 instructional travel monies provided sound instructional activities which had positive impact on children. More specifically:

- 86.0% felt that field trips has a positive impact on implementing IEP's.
- 82.7% felt that field trips had a positive impact on the social development of their students (e.g., developing the ability to interact in different settings).
- 77.0% felt that field trips made a significant impact on instruction (e.g., by providing first hand experiences for special students).

(4) More than 85.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Instructional Travel Program should continue to receive P.L. 94-142 funds.

(5) Respondents were asked to "list any suggestions you have to make the program stronger/more effective." Suggestions included:

(a) Increase the monies so that teachers can provide more field trips for students.
(b) Provide each teacher a copy of P.L. 94-142 instructional travel policies and procedures early in the year.
(c) Compile a "guide" of places chosen by special education teachers, telephone numbers, hours, and the name of a contact person. The information would save teachers time.

EVALUATION REPORT

P.L. 94-142
INSTRUCTIONAL TRAVEL

Program Description

Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) elected to use some of its Public Law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act Part B (P.L. 94-142) funds to provide instructional travel monies (e.g., field trips) to C and D level classes. The APS Special Education Department chose to provide instructional travel monies for C and D level classes because students in these classes are considered to be the most severely handicapped and in need of the most intervention according to New Mexico State Regulations.

Each C and D level class (except programs for the gifted which are excluded in P.L. 94-142) was allocated $45.00. While recognizing that $45.00 could not cover all costs of a class field trip, program planners intended to partially defray the cost.

According to a memo sent out by the District P.L. 94-142 Plan Manager, the field trip... "must be tied to an instructional goal area contained in the I.E.P. [Individualized Education Program] of those students included in the trip." (Special Education Department memo, October 1, 1985, p. 1).

According to APS records, APS special education teachers selected a wide variety of places to take their students. Table 1 on page 8 summarizes the places chosen by teachers as they utilized their $45.00 allocation for instructional travel. Fifty-two (52) different activities were selected. The table also shows that roller skating, Natural History Museum, the Rio Grande Zoo, Coronado and Winrock Shopping Centers, and La Cienega were the most frequently chosen field trips by all levels (elementary, middle and high).

EVALUATION DESIGN

Development Of The Study

In January of 1986, Central Office Special Education Department administrators met with representatives from the Planning, Research and Accountability Department (PRA) to prioritize for study the 35 P.L. 94-142 components. The Instructional Travel Component was considered to be a priority for evaluation by the Special Education Department. Hence, it was studied at the end of the 1985-86 school year.

The evaluator from PRA was assigned to study the impact and effectiveness of the component. Beginning in April, 1986, the evaluator interviewed key special education administrators and teachers in randomly selected schools to ascertain: 1) the purpose of the program; 2) the field trips selected; 3) their perceptions of the contribution of field trips; 4) the impact of the field trips on students and program; and 5) questions they wanted answered.

The research questions evolved from pre-survey interviews, and ultimately became an outline for this report. The questions were:

1. What field trips were selected?
2. What were the main reasons for taking field trips?
3. What was the impact on children?
4. Should the funding continue?
5. What could be done to make the program stronger/more effective?

Data collection was accomplished through interviews, review of records, and survey research. Each of these methods is briefly described.

Interviews. Group and individual interviews of special education teachers, administrators, and aides were conducted prior to the survey and, in some instances, after the survey. Pre-survey interviews were conducted at randomly selected schools to obtain background information about instructional travel and to determine if staff had questions they would like answered. All questions were incorporated into the study. Post-survey interviews were used to clarify issues raised in comments on the survey.

Review Of Records. Records in the P.L. 94-142 Plan Manager's Office and Special Education Central Office Administration's files were reviewed. The purpose of the review was to ascertain which field trips were selected and the rationale for the selection.

Survey Research. One hundred seventy-four (174) principals, assistant principals, and C and D level special education teachers were randomly selected to be surveyed to ascertain the perceived impact and effectiveness of the instructional travel program. Ninety (90) or 51.7% responded with usable instruments. Comments were solicited on the strengths and weaknesses of the program and how the program could be made stronger.

Rather than discuss the results of each data source in isolation, all the information has been integrated according to topics throughout the discussion. The end result is a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness and impact of the instructional travel component.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

What Field Trips Were Selected And What Was The Perceived Impact?

According to APS records, APS special education teachers selected a wide variety of places to take their students. Table 1 on page 7 summarizes the places chosen by teachers as they utilized their $45.00 allocation for instructional travel. Fifty-two (52) different activities were selected. The table also shows that roller skating, Natural History Museum, the Rio Grande Zoo, Santa Fe, Coronado and Winrock Shopping Centers, and La Cienega Village were the most frequently chosen field trips by all levels (elementary, middle, and high).

Comments on the survey and interviews substantiated the finding that teachers from different levels (e.g., elementary, middle, and high) had very different perceptions of the contribution of field trips. More specifically, most high school special education teachers saw instructional travel as a way to help students learn work-study skill applications, become aware of different jobs available, or how to use public transportation. High school teachers took students to shopping centers, the airport, and a bakery to see where they could apply work-study skills. Some high school teachers used field trips as a reward for student behavior. These teachers took students fishing, roller skating, or to the zoo.

Middle school teachers indicated a wide variety of reasons for utilizing instructional travel. Most reasons could be categorized as "instructional" or "social." Instructional reasons cited by middle school teachers included:

- -creating motivation for classroom studies (e.g., La Cienega for New Mexico History).
- -providing concrete experiences for classroom concepts (e.g., State Capitol and the legislature for social studies).

TABLE 1

FIELD TRIP SUMMARY

TRIP	FREQUENCY	LEVEL	TRIP	FREQUENCY	LEVEL
Roller Skating	186	A	Maxwell Museum	5	H
Natural History Museum	87	A	Bank	4	A
Rio Grande Zoo	74	A	Coronado Monument	4	A
Santa Fe (Capitol)	41	A	KOAT/KNME	4	H
Coronado/Winrock	34	A	Planetarium	4	E/M
La Cienega Village	34	M/E	Hidden Valley Fishing	4	H
Very Special Arts Festival	33	A	Horseback Riding	3	A
Sandias/Jemez Mountains	26	A	Indian Pueblo Cultural Center	3	M
Kimo Theater	20	E	Nature Center	3	E/M
Park (City)	19	A	Belen Rock Quarry	3	M
Swimming	15	E	Bakery	3	E/M
Train	14	M	Airport	3	H
Miniature Golf	14	M	Albuquerque Journal	3	H
An Indian Pueblo	13	A	Play	3	H
Uncle Cliffs	11	A	Balloon Fiesta	3	H
Rowlands Nursery	11	M	Old Town	3	M
Ranchos De Las Golondrinas	10	E	Hospital	2	H
UNM	9	A	Restaurant	2	M
Child's/Teacher's Home	6	E	Las Huertas (Sandias)	2	E
Therapeutic Horsemanship	6	M	Sandia Outdoor Center	2	E
Albuquerque Museum	6	M	Adelante	2	H
National Atomic Museum	6	A	Popcorn Cannery	2	E
State Fair	6	A	Sandia Labs	1	H
Goodwill	6	A	Movie	1	H
Ranger Station	6	E	Santa Clara Pueblo	1	M
Middle School Visits	5	E	Trolley	1	E

LEGEND

E=Elementary M=Mid School H=High School A=All Levels/All Programs

Social reasons cited by middle school teachers included:

-teaching students to interact with others in a different setting (e.g., Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, zoo).
-providing an opportunity to demonstrate adaptive behavior (e.g., how to react when you miss a public bus or how to be comfortable in a community setting such as a museum).

Elementary teachers indicated that instructional travel provided:

-first-hand experiences and information (e.g., shopping centers)
-increased verbalization and vocabulary (e.g., zoo)
-a sense of security in different settings (e.g., museums, shopping centers)
-experiences which give new meaning to school work (e.g., La Cienega)
-opportunities for students to interact in different settings.

What Was The Impact On Children?

Educators interviewed and surveyed were all asked if, in their opinion, field trips had a positive impact on implementing each child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Of those responding to the questionnaire, 86% either agreed or strongly agreed that instructional travel had a positive impact on implementing IEP's. Many interviewed showed the evaluator IEP's to demon-strate how field trips were tied into the curriculum and IEP's. For instance, a trip to the Rio Grande Zoo for an elementary class reportedly provided some students an opportunity to increase their vocabulary and encouraged verbalization. Another child saw and touched a goat for the first time--providing a "concrete experience" for him. The IEP's for two students specified the objective "to develop his/her ability to interact with classmates appropriately." The field trip provided an opportunity for them to interact appropriately in a setting other than the classroom.

Those surveyed felt strongly that the P.L. 94-142 instructional travel monies had a positive impact on children. More specifically:

-86.0% felt that field trips had a positive impact on implementing IEP's.
-82.7% felt that field trips had a positive impact on the social development of their students (e.g., developing the ability to interact in different settings).
-77.0% felt that field trips made a significant impact on instruction (e.g., by providing first hand experiences for special students).

Curiously, despite the perception of the positive impact of field trips, only 70% of those surveyed utilized their $45.00 allocation. Most cited that it just was not enough money. This is expanded in the section on "What Can Be Done To Make The Program Stronger/More Effective" beginning on page 10.

Should The Funding For
The Program Continue?

An overwhelming 85.1% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Instructional Travel Program should continue to receive funds from P.L. 94-142. Several wrote comments indicating their rationale for wanting the program to continue. The responses are categorized and summarized in the section that follows. The number of people citing similar suggestions is noted in parentheses at the end of each comment.

-All children can benefit from field trips, regardless of their level of disability. (53 comments)

-Field trips are wonderful teaching tools. (28 comments)

-Field trips let a child take what he/she learns in the classroom (e.g., interacting skills) and apply it to the outside world. (18 comments)

-Trips enhance the curriculum for students and teachers. (18 comments)

-Instructional travel is a great way to help special education students become more aware of their community. (11 comments)

The above comments confirm that responding teachers see field trips as an effective instructional tool. Teachers appear to believe in field trips as a sound instructional activity which can be an extremely valuable learning tool.

What Could Be Done
To Make The Program
Stronger/More Effective?

Those surveyed were asked to list any suggestions that could make the program stronger/more effective. The responses are summarized below. The number in parentheses at the end of each comment indicates the number making similar observations.

-Increase the monies and expand the program. Field trips are excellent teaching tools. It shows students we care. Also, field trips increase students' language experiences, social skills and academic skills. Increase the money! (41 responses)

-Increase the number of field trips from one per year to two per semester. (29 responses)

-Increase the number of field trips to four per semester. (26 responses)

-We had to combine with other classes to cover the cost of the bus. We lose teaching effectiveness with large groups. (21 responses)

-Develop a no-nonsense way of applying for funds. We (teachers) need written guidelines! (12 responses)

-This survey is the first time I heard about the funds. (11 responses)

-$45.00 doesn't cover costs, especially if you want to go out of town. (10 responses)

-I spent a whole day getting information and making arrangements. Please make a guide that would include:

(1) Lists of places, telephone numbers, hours, and the name of a contact person.
(2) What activities/facilities are accessible, available and appropriate. BD teachers need to know if their kids can "do" something.
(3) Free or cut rate places. (10 responses)

-Pro-rate trips by handicapping condition. The cost of transportation, especially for children in wheelchairs, is prohibitive. (6 responses)

Additional Findings

Follow-up interviews were conducted to ascertain why teachers did not choose to use their $45.00 allocation for field trips or did not take field trips.

Every elementary teacher interviewed cited cost of field trips as being prohibitive especially when they had to rent a bus. Secondary teachers indicated that time was their biggest concern: teachers did not want to take time away from classroom instruction. Also, secondary teachers (especially middle school teachers) were concerned with student behavior. Secondary teachers also cited cost as a factor in not taking field trips.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The P.L. 94-142 Instructional Travel (e.g., Field Trip) Program was evaluated in April and May, 1986. The Program allocated $45.00 to every C and D-level class in the District (except programs for the gifted) to help defray the cost of one field trip. Each field trip was to be tied to an instructional goal area.

The study was designed to evaluate the impact of the program on students and the instructional program. Data were collected by three methods: interviews, review of records, and survey research.

Major Findings

The major findings of the study were:

1. The five most frequently selected field trip destinations were roller skating, Museum of Natural History, the Rio Grande Zoo, Coronado or Winrock Shopping Centers, and La Cienega (a "living" village/hacienda representing the early history of New Mexico).

2. Field trips were selected primarily for three major instructional purposes:
   a) To provide a reward or reinforcer for students' behavior (e.g., Hidden Valley Fishing or the zoo because students behaved well).
   b) To provide an activity related to a specific instructional goal (e.g., New Mexico History and first hand experience at La Cienega); assisting with vocabulary development (e.g., learning names of animals at the zoo); or verbalization (e.g., asking questions about animals at the zoo).
   c) To provide a culminating activity for a unit of study. Many teachers elected to use their instructional travel monies to provide a field trip that would help summarize a unit of study and motivate students in classroom work (e.g., Museum of Natural History).

3. Teachers from different levels (e.g., elementary, middle and high school levels) perceived the contribution of field trips differently. Specifically:
   a) High school special education teachers tended to use field trips for application of work-study skills or career awareness activities.
   b) Middle school teachers tended to use field trips to meet (1) instructional goals (e.g., creating motivation for classroom studies) and (2) social goals (e.g., teaching students to interact with others in different settings).

c) Elementary school special education teachers tended to use field trips (1) to provide first-hand experiences for students; (2) to provide concrete experiences for classroom concepts; (3) to meet other instructional goals; and, (4) to meet social development goals.

4. Of those surveyed, 70.7% elected to use their allocation for instructional travel monies. This was a substantially lower percentage than anticipated by the special education department. Seventeen percent (17%) of those responding did not feel that $45.00 was worth the effort of utilizing it for field trips. The remaining 13% did not know that the monies were available.

5. Respondents were asked to "list any suggestions you have to make the program stronger/more effective." Responses included requests to:
   a) Increase the allocation to more than $45.00 per class--especially for those classes which need wheelchair busses.
   b) Inform teachers of the availability of the funds early in the year. Also, give each teacher a copy of P.L. 94-142 field trip policies and procedures early in the year.
   c) Increase the number of field trips funded in a school year.
   d) Create a guide listing places to visit, hours, telephone number(s), cost, contact people, and other necessary information.

Current APS policy insures that staff, including the project leader, will review the data and findings contained in the report. A plan which includes appropriate steps to address identified program needs will be implemented.